

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1010

October 12, 2021

JODY B. HICE
10TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA
HICE.HOUSE.GOV

404 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4101

100 COURT STREET
MONROE, LA 70655
(770) 207-1776
(770) 266-6751 FAX

1020 PARK DRIVE, SUITE B
GREENSBORO, NC 27402
(762) 445-1776
(770) 266-6751 FAX

210 RAILROAD STREET, ROOM 2401
THOMSON, GA 30824
(706) 969-1461

The Honorable Antony Blinken
United States Secretary of State
Office of the Secretary, United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Blinken and Acting Director Young:

In the month since the last U.S. military forces withdrew from Afghanistan, we have remained in contact with many Americans and allies still desperately seeking escape from the brutal Taliban regime. In many of these cases, our congressional offices have been the only official points of contact with the American government. We are deeply concerned and dismayed by the U.S. Department of State's lack of action to ensure these individuals escape imminent danger. The United States of America has a clear duty to assist all U.S. Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and Afghan allies.

Many of those still trapped in Afghanistan are hoping to reach safety via neighboring countries. It is paramount that the State Department move swiftly to coordinate with these nations to ensure their cooperation in the evacuation. The situation in Afghanistan is already unsafe and may quickly become even more dangerous. There is a considerable threat of civil war as the Taliban seeks to strengthen its hold on the country. Recent reports indicate that the Taliban has begun deploying troops along the border with Tajikistan, thereby sealing off possible escape routes. Furthermore, winter is coming, and many mountain passes will close due to snow in a few short weeks, essentially sealing the ground routes from Kabul.

We request that the State Department as well as the Office of Management and Budget:

- Transmit to Congress all necessary temporary authorizations and appropriations needs to fully execute the complete evacuation of U.S. citizens, visa holders, and Afghan allies within ten days.

- Immediately deploy consulate teams to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan for the vetting of Afghans transiting through those countries to onward destinations, whether here to the U.S. or another allied country.
- Find additional temporary staging countries to increase capacity to conduct visa interviews, process cases, provide medical treatments, and issue final destination travel documents for Afghan evacuees.
- Request solicitors review delegations of authority and surnaming procedures within the State Department to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and streamline processes.
- Finally, please assign and provide all necessary personnel and resources to the Afghanistan Task Force until the end of 2022.

The State Department must find solutions to ensure that these individuals can reach safety – and have their cases moved forward in safe and secure environments outside Taliban-controlled territory. We owe it to our Afghan allies.

We ask that you respond no later than October 29, 2021.

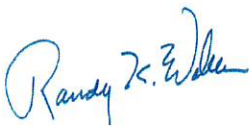
Sincerely,



Jody Hice (GA-10)
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa (CA-50)
Member of Congress



Randy Weber (TX-14)
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert (CO-03)
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (GA-01)
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert (TX-01)
Member of Congress



Ronny L. Jackson (TX-13)
Member of Congress



Tracey Mann (KS-01)
Member of Congress



Lisa McClain (MI-10)
Member of Congress



Mary Miller (IL-15)
Member of Congress



Bill Posey (FL-08)
Member of Congress